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ON THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOVIET LABOR LAW

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In the very first days of its existence, the Soviet government legally established the 8-hour workday. It shortened the workday in hazardous industries, strictly limited overtime work, extended legislative labor protection to all workers, and introduced broad and complete social insurance. Worker's inspection by elected representatives was started, and strict responsibility of employers for infringements of labor-protection laws and principles was established. The Council of the People's Commissars issued decrees specifying annual leave of absence with pay for all workers, and organization of nurseries and children's playgrounds at factories and plants, privileges for women workers and juveniles, improvement of working conditions, and accident prevention.

In December of 1918 the first Soviet Labor Code was issued which organized and strengthened foregoing labor legislation.

The 1918 Code remained in force until 15 November 1922, when a new code was put into effect which, with some changes and additions, is still in effect today. It has not only preserved, but extended labor guarantees contained in the first code.

A collective labor agreement solves, principally, only those problems not regulated by law. This collective agreement is directed toward fulfillment and overfulfillment of the production plan, improvement of work organization, and raising of the workers' standard of living.

Soviet labor legislation is basically different from the legal regulation of labor practiced under capitalism. In capitalist society, manpower is a commodity, and is treated as a commercial item. Capitalist labor relations are

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relations are relations of exploitation of the worker by the capitalist. Labor protection laws do not easily open a way for themselves in capitalist countries. The bourgeoisie seizes every opportunity to weaken these laws or to repeal them. In 1947, monopolist circles in the US secured adoption by Congress of the reactionary Taft-Hartley Act, with the intent of dealing a blow to trade unions, and weakening the position of the working class in its struggle against the attack on its standard of living by American monopolist capital.

A policy of racial and national discrimination is widely executed in the regulation of labor conditions in capitalist countries. In America, England, Iran, Australia, and other countries, labor conditions vary according to nationality and race of the workers, and according to sex and age. This not only supplies the capitalist with cheap labor, but makes possible wage reduction, and lowering of working conditions.

In the USSR, manpower is not a commodity for it is applied to the tools and means of production which themselves belong to the working components of socialist possessions. Labor is the basis of socialist society. Questions of organization, productivity, and protection of labor make up the most important tasks of legislation, politics, and science.

Labor relations in the USSR are relations of friendly cooperation based on socialization of the means of production and absence of exploitation. In the USSR, labor is not compared with property.

The work of the members of the collective farms and that of the cooperative craftsmen is regulated by codes of the appropriate cooperative artels.

The Soviet State provides for systematic State and public control of observance of labor laws and decrees. Trade unions are allowed extensive rights and privileges, and all State organs are pledged to give them their full cooperation.

One of the basic principles of the Soviet Labor Law is compulsory work for all able-bodied citizens.

Socialist industrialization of the country and collectivization of agriculture finally eliminated the capitalist elements in the USSR.

The most important factor in the increased productivity of labor, making industrialization possible, was the conscientious discipline of the workers and organization of labor competition.

The Stakhanov movement resulted in decrees directed toward guaranteeing favorable working conditions for Stakhanovites, disseminating Stakhanov work methods, reorganizing technical standardization and wages, increasing knowledge and qualifications of workers, and instituting privileges and advantages for Stakhanovites.

In the course of the Five-Year Plans, the USSR has overtaken and surpassed the main capitalist countries in technology and rate of economic development. The 18th Congress of the VKP(b) raised the question from an economic point of view. The 18th All-Union Conference of the VKP(b) took concrete steps toward the accomplishment of this task, but Germany's attack delayed it. With the end of the war, the Soviet nation has again turned to its accomplishment.

Among the workers, there is still a small group who are not conscientious in their work. Small as it is, it is still capable of doing

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considerable damage to socialist production. Strong labor discipline and high labor productivity have been demanded of all workers. Public opinion, persuasion, education, and measures of compulsion, economic and legal, are being applied to shirkers.

During the period of socialistic industrialization of the country and collectivization of agriculture, a series of legal acts directed toward strengthening labor discipline were adopted. These laws were met with friendly support by the working masses.

Most important factor in securing socialist labor discipline and increasing work efficiency is the system of material and moral incentives.

Unemployment was completely ended in 1930. Since then this problem cannot arise in Soviet society. The USSR is the only country in the world without the unemployment, crises, depressions, etc., known in capitalist countries.

Planning of economic development on a national scale in accord with the interests of society has replaced the weak competition of individual owners confusedly transferring capital from one branch to another.

The USSR Labor Law not only guarantees work for every citizen, but guarantees that the work will be appropriate to the individual's specialties and qualifications. Use in capitalist countries of skilled workers, specialists, and educated persons for work unsuited to them is unthinkable in the USSR.

The planned nature of socialist economy plays a leading role in the Soviet State in distribution and reproduction of manpower. The Soviet State uses different forms of work attraction depending on the circumstances. At the end of the war, the economic organizations turned to organized recruiting of workers by means of agreements with collective farms and individual members of the collective farms. In 1947, the USSR government instituted a new form of organized recruiting of manpower. Recruiting of workers from the country is carried on by the Ministry of Labor Reserves instead of by the economic organizations themselves.

The problem of obtaining skilled workers is a question of raising the cultural and technical level of workers. Training of skilled workers is being accomplished through educational institutions and at the enterprises, and by increasing the qualifications of workers already having the jobs.

The Soviet State, aiming at a radical solution for supplying industry and transport with skilled manpower, started to create State labor reserves in 1940. A decree of 2 October 1940 advanced the principle of centralization of training and distribution of these reserves, stating that not individual enterprises, but a State organ especially created for that purpose--the Main Administration of Labor Reserves in SNK of the USSR (now the Ministry of Labor Reserves USSR)--would train and, by a resolution of the Government, distribute the reserves. The system of instruction in each occupation is based on maximum approximation of industrial conditions. The most important method of training is teaching young workers about the industry, itself, through brigade and individual apprenticeship, Stakhanov schools, and patronage by leading workers.

The new Five-Year Plan specifies the output in 5 years of 4,500,000 young workers by the schools and colleges of the Ministry of Labor Reserves, and the training by means of individual and brigade apprenticeship of 5,400,000 workers. While working at their usual occupations, 13,900,000

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workers will improve their skills.

is the redistribution and redistribution of manpower, transference importance
and working conditions and improvement of financial conditions
of workers, especially those in critical branches of industry, etc.
The Ministry of Ministers USSR, in December 1945, stipulating
the need for underground workers, etc. etc. and the
importance of the coal industry and the importance of the industry,
etc. etc. of great national economic and political significance.

At the Sixth Congress of the Soviets, Y. M. Molotov quoted data concerning wages of American, German, and Soviet workers which illustrated the wage reduction of workers in capitalist countries, and the wage-rise increase in the USSR.

A policy of wage differentiation according to skill and productivity is followed by the Soviet State. Any wage differentiation for reasons of sex, age, nationality, race, or religion was eliminated at the very start.

The Party and the Soviet power defended the socialist principle of wages according to quantity and quality of work in the struggle against the hostile anti-Party and anti-Soviet groups who opposed the wage-scale policy of the Party.

In capitalist countries, the principle of an 8-hour day is usually confined only to individual branches of industry or categories of work. In Russia, full realization of the 8-hour day became possible only after the power was in the hands of the working class. In return, it is the worker's duty to fulfill production norms, attain regular overfulfillment of these norms, and do to high-quality work.

Citizens of the USSR have the right to financial security in old age, sickness and loss of capacity for work, to free medical assistance, and use of an extensive system of health resorts.

Old age, sickness, and loss of capacity for work are linked with loss of means of subsistence for the majority of workers in capitalist society. Partial social insurance exists in some capitalist countries, but it does not include all the workers, nor all cases of loss of earning power.

The following data shows the development of social insurance in the USSR. In the First Five-Year Plan (1928-1932) expenditures for social insurance amounted to more than 10 billion rubles, and in the Second Five-Year Plan (1933-1938), to more than 32 billion rubles. The social insurance budget for the new Five-Year Plan is 62,700,000,000 rubles, not including free medical assistance, which is an expenditure of the public health budget.

In the USSR, social insurance is extended to all workers and is dependent solely on compulsory payments by enterprises and institutions. The workers, themselves, bear none of the expense of social insurance. Its management and means are in the hands of the insured, represented by the labor unions.

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